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MAIL:

Dear Friend,
You must know the Fugitives arrived last night and that they are extraordinary. Dan May, Sam and I had them over at the cottage, took cover up, back cover up, and present. There is absolutely a profusion of violence and cruelty, they make George Eastman's *Gas* look like a *Gas* job. Already Fugitives has changed my life, has raised my sense of responsibility, like George Eastman. Gas forever is a garage publication for comparison and I hope it always is.

Dear Anger:
Last month's issue of *Design* (p. 362) was very enjoyable for me. I recently graduated from the design program at SVA and I think I would like to make the figure at the website an Rock Hall was very interesting. In fact, I am working on a figure and your issue (*Design* #11) is an inspiration to me. I am not sure about what kind of program is of interest to me. I am not sure how many months it would take to make this figure of paper that really looks like a flat painting missing for me. Thank you.

we are the partners
You and I.

Dear Engine,
I am now most anxious, mother and I had the feeling I was being asked to participate. Through financial contributions, all special in supporting an energy enterprise. I had my personal visualization of "hydroelectric" to be somewhat beginning and similar had such a thing right within 1000' altitude to be at 10' elevation to begin with. I am not sure if I am correct in this. I am not sure if I am correct in this. I am not sure if I am correct in this. But for day I was informed something for your review, but that first time was nothing like "Paper Company".
I hope this letter you have been in a study point. Please keep it as I am sure all the public, private, intergovernmental, and other organizations are interested in this. I am sure you will be able to do a good job in this. I am sure you will be able to do a good job in this. I am sure you will be able to do a good job in this.

Frank Bauer (Institute of Chemistry), University of Bayreuth, Germany

Later, *Journal of Health Psychology* 2000, 15, 409-416

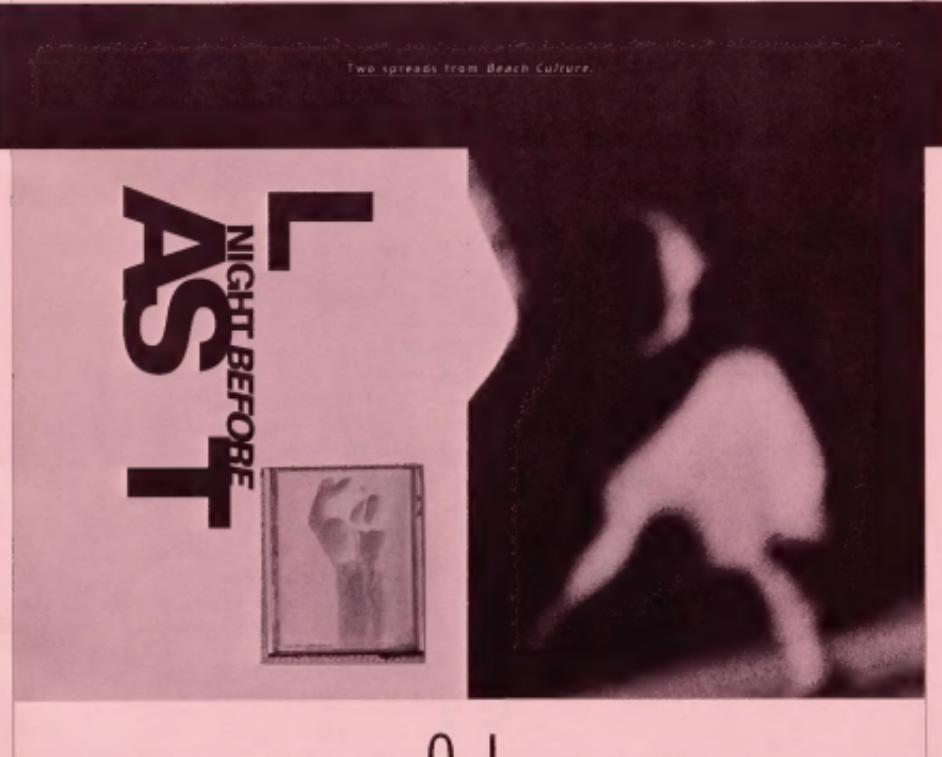
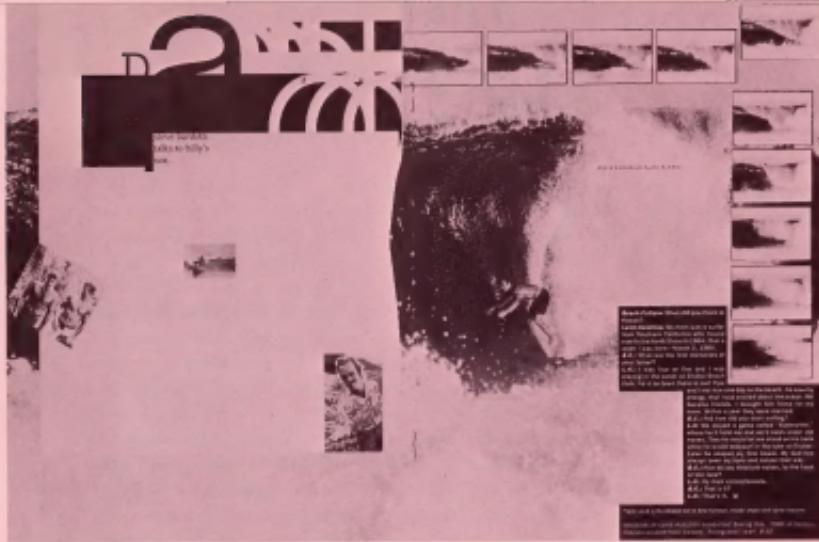
Dear Friends:
The longer I live, experiencing approximately 50 years of the human race and several such crises of Europe, around safety increases warning, why was there no health warning by so many years ago?
As a more moral than depressive moral direction, only my wife's favorable response to the condition by visiting no dental clinic of importance saved me from the foolish world.
George and Rosalind, Brazil.

Contents: Yes

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Music Catalog





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Once in a while, against all odds, somebody gets the chance to pursue his or her most passionate dreams and turns what starts off as a labor of love project into a highly influential and financially successful venture. Such was the case with the London-based record company 4AD. When founder Ivo Watts-Russell coincidentally ran into graphic designer Vaughan Oliver and hired him to design their album covers, over the next ten years they not only changed the sound of contemporary popular music and introduced us to a slew of some of the most original bands around, but in the process had a tremendous influence on record sleeve design as well. To a degree, 4AD records was a perfect example of being in the right place at the right time. Yet none of their success would have been realized if it weren't for founder Ivo Watts-Russell's brilliant sense of the "business" of music. "If you look hard enough, you will always find someone taking risks," said Ivo in their recently published tenth anniversary book "Lilliput." "but you need the means, ideals and reputation to attract them and the ability to represent them accurately." Not just an innovator, but also financially sound after recently signing a major licensing deal with Warner/Reprise, 4AD is my idea of a real "success" story.

Beach Culture could have been the magazine to accomplish in magazine publishing what 4AD Records has accomplished in the world of releasing music. *Beach Culture* was realized through the sheer blind ambition and single minded devotion of graphic designer David Carson and, from issue #R2 onward, editor Neil Feineman, as well as a few anonymous yet very gifted interns. Unfortunately, due to an uncommitted parent company and a veritable non-existent distribution, the magazine folded before it ever had a chance to break even. Although it has undoubtedly left a deep impression on the world of graphic design (it has reportedly won more than 150 design awards!), in a larger sense, *Beach Culture* will soon be forgotten and can be added to a long list of failed "dream" projects.

I've always admired the efforts of *Beach Culture's* graphic designer David Carson. His ability to pull together and implement some of the typographic experiments that were taking place in various art schools and other underground publications was unrivaled. And just as Vaughan Oliver's development as a graphic designer would not have happened without Ivo Watts-Russell's encouragement, Carson's work was partially the result of editor Neil Feineman's willingness to experiment with some of the basic notions of magazine make-up, and his trust and respect for his art director's creative capabilities. Feineman's editorial stance, summed up in issue #R5, when he wrote that *Beach Culture* was about "the refusal to blindly accept authority or limitations at face value," should also not be discounted. His use of the beach as a metaphor when writing about the counterculture at large, and his cunning ability to always find an original angle for his articles, combined with his willingness to take his words and marry them to some of the most subjective graphic design, places him within a tiny group of risk-takers within the magazine publishing world.

As with the 4AD Records team of Ivo Watts-Russell/Vaughan Oliver or *The Face's* combination of Nick Logan/Neville Brody, *Beach Culture's* creative accomplishments were the result of the synergy that existed between two very talented people, an editor and a designer. This is what made it the extraordinary magazine that it was. However, for all its courageous efforts, *Beach Culture*, with its circulation of 7,000 to 10,000, was still considered by magazine publishing standards, a tiny "underground" publication.

(Continued on opposite page)

b n d

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Now there is *Ray Gun*. Founded by publisher Marvin Jarrett (former publisher of *Cream*), the self-proclaimed "Bible of Music + Style," arises out of the ashes of *Beach Culture* and once again teams up editor Neil Feineman with graphic designer David Carson. *Ray Gun* has already received the stamp of approval (and the financial backing) from Ingram Periodicals, a major international magazine and book distributor, which is committed to placing this magazine on every B. Dalton and Waldenbooks newsstand around America. Perhaps this time around, with solid distribution and sufficient financing, Carson, Feineman and Jarrett have the opportunity to really influence the way magazines are published, beyond simply winning countless design awards (which, I believe, was largely indicative of the staleness in publication design in America and the obsession with surface style that these competitions seem to emphasize). If *Ray Gun* is successful, it will give us a more realistic idea of whether the mainstream is ready for the untried. If so, magazine publishing will be changed forever.

The following interviews with David Carson⁸, Marvin Jarrett and Neil Feineman are supplemented with the essay "Feeding the Monster." Pointedly written by CalArts graduate Anne Burdick, this article questions the very graphic design competitions that gave *Beach Culture* its credence within the graphic design community. The article was given visual shape by Burdick while residing in Holland. A big "thank you" goes out to Anne, for letting us publish this article, and Vincent van Baar, who kindly allowed Anne to use his brand new Macintosh computer to create the layouts at the Barlack design office in The Hague, Holland.

⁸Although David Carson initially agreed to be interviewed for this issue, he declined. Seconds before the interview was supposed to take place, he received another "no, just not now" from his agent. We asked him if he would be willing to answer a few questions that we intended to ask him. We apologize that this has invalidated the announcement, in our promotional material, which stated that this issue would feature an interview with David Carson.

0 3



Beach Culture



Ray Gun (in back issue #1)

11 QUESTIONS

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK

By Rudy VanderLans

David Carson

1.1 How do you manage all these various jobs that you're involved in? You art-direct two magazines, you do all kinds of free-lance work, etc. How do you keep them all separate? Or do you have a design agenda of your own that you simply apply to all jobs?

1.2 Anne Burdick, in her article "Feeding the Moaster" in the section entitled: "Graphic Design: Cause and Effect or Pop Stardom and Its Pitfalls," writes about the rate at which styles and stylists are being gobbled up and spit out. You have worked for some companies that thrive on style, companies such as MTV, Vans, Beach Culture, Self magazine. One way or another, your work must fit into their notion of what is "hot" and "in style," which, subsequently, means that you are at risk of being gobbled up and spit out by the profession due to your involvement with these style-hungry clients. Are you at all concerned about this?

1.3 When I saw your lecture during the HOW design conference in San Diego earlier this year, you showed some previous work, some pre Beach Culture design work. Much of that work, from what I could see, was very punk-like: lots of collage and torn paper edges, and very bold. With Beach Culture, starting with issue #2, there was an abrupt change of design approach. There were still layouts, like the one on "Laird Hamilton," which were along the lines of your earlier work, but then there were layouts like "Tony Hawk" and "Riding the Rails," which looked much more calculated or "detailed" perhaps. What caused this sudden change in approach?

1.4 I've always wondered why you used so many established artists in Beach Culture, people such as Mahurin, Arisman, Henrik Drescher and even Milton Glaser. Since you were zeroing in on the counterculture with Beach Culture, you had a great opportunity to introduce more younger, less established and less polished talent.

1.5 Steven Heller in his review of the book "Typography Now: The Next Wave" wondered whether "The limits of typographic experimentation may have been stretched so far that reevaluation is the logical next step." He asked the (perhaps rhetorical) question "How much more obliterated can type be than that already achieved by David Carson, who, in his final issue of Beach Culture, overprinted headlines that looked like the result of some computer malfunction?" I think he is asking the wrong question, though. I would like to ask: why obliterate type in the first place?

1.6 Rick Poynor, in his introduction to the book "Typography Now: The Next Wave," talks about the work of the Why Not Associates and your work and says that "The work is formally stunning, but its relevance to the content is not always clear. The designs function decoratively as a means of engaging, amusing, persuading and no doubt sometimes infuriating the reader, rather than as vehicles for extending meaning or exploring the text." Do you agree with this assessment of your work? Is your work no more than what Andy Altman of the Why Nots calls "Type as Entertainment?"

1.7 The last paragraph of the book "Typography Now" states that "The author and typographer must work together much more closely than is usually the case to establish and amplify textual meaning. Only then will there be a satisfying relationship between typographic expression and text." This is easier said than done. You know as well as anybody that it remains difficult to establish such a relationship with authors. Although you have had the luck to work with editor Neil Feinerman at Beach Culture and now at Ray Gun, you have also mentioned that with Surfer magazine it is quite a battle to implement some of your more challenging ideas. Why do you think this is?

1.8 What do you think of design competitions and Anne Burdick's criticism that they only deal with the formal aspects of design?

1.9 You have judged some design competitions yourself. What do you look for when picking an award-winning design?

1.10 You also do a fair amount of lectures. What are some of the usual questions you get afterwards? And what are your answers?

1.11 I have written in my introduction that with Ray Gun, you perhaps have the chance to really change magazine publishing because you now have the benefit of serious distribution and committed backers. Ray Gun's editor Neil Feinerman, in the following interview, maintains that Ray Gun is more or less the next step for you. Do you think that your approach, as we've seen it in Beach Culture, can be digested by a larger, mainstream audience?

Interview with Neil Feineman.

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR OF

RAY GUN

E M I G R E : Where are you? **N** E I L : I am actually in my other office. I also edit a magazine called *Action Sports*, which is a trade magazine that goes to the surfboard, skateboard and snowboard industries. I have a full office setup here, with a staff and all. **E** M I G R E : How did you get involved with all this beach stuff? **N** E I L : I am definitely a beach person. I met David [Carson] through this interest. I wrote for the *L.A. Times* a lot but nobody was really writing about pop history or pop culture or the beach, so I was using my mainstream work to subsidize self-published histories on beach sports. That's how I came to *Beach Culture*. It's a completely authentic interest. **E** M I G R E : You joined *Beach Culture* with issue #2 and you were listed as "editor," but in later issues you were listed as the "publisher/editor." What happened? **N** E I L : Because I have a history of magazine start-up, combined with a visibility within the beach industries, I was brought in to tame this... How much do you want me to talk about *Beach Culture*? **E** M I G R E : A lot. Since *Ray Gun* isn't really published yet (this interview took place while the first issue of *Ray Gun* was at the printer), I have little else to ask you questions about. **N** E I L : David and I are looking at *Ray Gun* as the next step. So if it gets boring let me know. **E** M I G R E : Don't worry, because of its design, *Beach Culture* is very intriguing to graphic designers. **N** E I L : It's surprising how much interest a dead magazine still generates. **E** M I G R E : Maybe this tells you something. **N** E I L : It certainly does, but maybe we need not pursue that much further.

Any-

"It's surprising how much interest a dead magazine still generates."

Way, what happened was that there was a publication that Surfer put out, an "advertisorial" publication that was distributed, funny enough, at the *Action Sports* trade show. It was called *Surfer Style* and, essentially, what it was about was that you would buy a full-page ad and get a very puffy editorial feature fronting or opposite that ad, written for you, with copy approval. I wasn't involved in this. I mean, each page was like "This is the breakthrough sportswear line of the century!" Simply because that industry was so flush at the time, they could afford to bankroll this oversize, glossy, what I thought was essentially meaningless, publication. Anyway, it was very successful, and on a fluke, as I understand it, because this is all second hand, the print run went over and they had more copies than they knew what to do with, so they figured let's stick them on the newsstand. So they stuck them on five newsstands and left them on forever, and they happened to sell. Then they got the idea to take it consumer. And I don't know at what point it became *Beach Culture* in the corporate process, but at some point they couldn't use the name *Surfer Style*, although I don't know why, so they changed it to *Beach Culture*. However, when they were selling ads, which was right before the surfwear crash, they sold them as if they were for *Surfer Style*, but they were really for *Beach Culture* #1, and that explains why that first issue was so thick. Everybody thought they were buying into an advertiser business, and this was during the last glory days, when everybody had money to burn. So all of a sudden they had sold some ninety ads, probably of which only thirty ever got paid for, but they sold these ninety ads and they came out with a hundred eighty page monster put together by a part-time editor and David. They had an unlimited budget and unlimited time to produce this issue and when it came out, opinions were very divided about it. But by the time it came out, the industry had already started suffering a decline. More importantly, when people saw what had happened, that it wasn't simply *Surfer Style* with a new name.

RAY GUN

but a whole new element, there was an uproar. It was pretty divided: some people loved it and some people hated it. Since the parent publication had no real interest in investing in a new magazine that wasn't going to be an immediate profit center, they didn't want anybody from the *Surfer* staff wasting any more time on it, so they interviewed a bunch of people, and they brought me in. At first I ostensibly was going to make it a more conventional magazine. Conventional meaning less weird, much more palatable to the surf industry, yet able to attract outside national accounts and an urban readership, people who viewed the beach more as, and this is getting intellectual, a metaphor, as opposed to just, you know, "There's a wave out there and I want to surf it and it is a really good wave."

"My goal was to give air to subjects whose essence was being missed because they were forced into conventional publishing modes."

(Neil Ferneman)

way, both David and I were free-lancers hired on an issue-by-issue basis and I was told that I had to make the magazine profitable or at least break even on each issue, although nobody really cared. I mean, I got there, and I asked "Who reads the blue lines?" and the answer was "**nobody**." So I asked "Well, who approves the covers?" and again "**nobody**." I thought, "this is just great!" I was taking about a three thousand dollar a month loss just by being there, but I really didn't care. My goal was to give air to subjects whose essence was being missed because they were forced into conventional publishing modes. Although I was hired to create, and completely revamp and tame this beast, as I got into it, I realized that they had instinctively done an extraordinary job of hitting it just right with the first issue. What they needed to do was to elevate the writing above their puff kind of "surfing is great," which didn't reflect David's tendency towards much darker images and him not being a surfer. I could really relate to the extreme egocentricity of the traditional surf world, which I felt was the fatal flaw in the beach life style, because it reflected an almost colonial mentality.

Is this interesting?

E M I G R E : Very.

NEIL: It seemed to me that surfers, who really had an almost Aryan mentality, were no longer reflective of the reality. The beach was no longer an isolated entity and was, in fact, for lots of artists, lots of black people, lots of gay people and lots of women of achievement and none of these people was getting any coverage at all. Also, there were real problems, such as massive pollution, gentrification and loss of identity. **E M I G R E :** In one of your intro's, you tried to sum up what *Beach Culture* was all about, and seemed to struggle a bit. You ended up writing that *Beach Culture* had "one common thread, the refusal to blindly accept authority or limitations at face value." That seems to be the editorial focus of every fanzine in America and hardly sets you apart from many of these magazines. **NEIL:** It doesn't set

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me apart from the fanzines, but believe me, it set me apart from the surfing magazines, which were my immediate environment. And because I didn't have the backing and the support of the parent company to get through the first year or two, when I could actually attract national advertisers, I was really dependent, completely dependent, in fact, upon ads that were pulled from the surf and skateboard industries. And while that quote is not at all a radical position within the general publishing world, the world of graphic design, or the skateboard world, or whatever, it was an incredibly radical stance to come from so deep within the ruling view of the surf industry. E M I G R E : But didn't that scare off advertisers? What you just said reminds me of a very funny letter that was published in *Beach Culture* №6. The letter was a response to the Pauly Shore article that you published where you obviously insulted a true surfer. Did you ever feel that with your editorial direction you would run the risk of alienating the readers that *Beach Culture* implied it was for and, perhaps, subsequently, scare off advertisers, too? *Beach Culture*'s ads seemed to get less with each issue. N E I L : You're asking two questions. I wasn't really worried about scaring off advertisers. When I started working at *Beach Culture*, I had no expectations that there would be so much resistance within the surf community to this magazine or to the message implied by just questioning authority and questioning the localism and the roots that existed. The publisher of *Surfer* magazine, who was at that point the publisher of *Beach Culture*, told me that I was going to alienate 95% of the surfer readership with *Beach Culture*, that they would not be interested in this magazine. I didn't believe that, and when it started happening I didn't really care, because I thought that the real audience I was looking for was the beach persons who the surfing magazines weren't reaching. I couldn't really care less about alienating traditional surfers, because they wouldn't carry the magazine; they thought it was weird and strange. I was much more concerned about alienating a person like myself and that's what I kept telling David. I said "Look, we are doing this magazine for two people, and if we think it is true to its roots, and if we think that it's saying something important, then I really don't care what people say. There will be people out there who will find us and who will respond." I tell you I had people showing up in my office like they were making religious pilgrimages. The receptionist would call me up and say "They're here, please come get them, because they are so weird!" E M I G R E : What kind of people were they? N E I L : They were disenfranchised surfers, they were skateboarders, they were the oddest assortment of people I have ever seen, and they would literally come in off the street. I discovered some of my best contributors through that and some of my worst as well. We were so amazed that people actually liked it, and were making efforts to meet us, because we were getting so much resistance inside our office. It was a very schizophrenic position.

Any-way, to answer your question, I thought that letter was very funny but it was reflective of the incredible resistance within the traditional surf community. But I had a mission and a letter like that told me I was doing something right. The people that we alienated the most were the people who advertised in *Surfer* or its other sister publications, *Powder* and *Snowboarder*. We alienated those people, but they never advertised with us in the first place. They'd say "You're too intelligent, you're too sophisticated," or "You're too old." I knew that they read *Beach Cul-*

"We were so amazed that people actually liked it, and were making efforts to meet us, because we were getting SO much resistance inside our office."

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nure, though. But we never lost an advertiser over editorial contents. **E M I G R E** : What did you lose them over? **N E I L** : They went out of business, that's the truth. **E M I G R E** : Perhaps because their ads in *Beach Culture* didn't reach the right audience? **Neil**: No. Within one year, the skateboard industry went from being a ninety million dollar industry to a fifteen million dollar industry. I literally had to deal with a battered industry when I started working for *Beach Culture*. But, and you can call the credit people on this one, virtually no default. I had people sending in \$100 checks a month to pay for their ads over time. This was a magazine that really hit its target market more than any magazine I've worked with in fifteen years. People who advertised with us really bent over backwards to remain with our magazine. We didn't even have an ads sales staff. David sold eighteen or twenty pages of ads for the last issue and even designed some of them. The one thing I never worried about was advertisers being warned. **E M I G R E** : Let me get back to the contents of *Beach Culture* which, as you said before, were obviously about much more than just the beach. You often used the beach simply as a metaphor, but at times, to me, it was a bit farfetched. For instance, the story on the Replacements started off with "Minneapolis in January is hardly anyone's idea of a typical beach town" and further on "... swim against the currents of corporate rock." It almost seemed as if the title "*Beach Culture*" was perhaps too restrictive for what you really wanted to do with this magazine. **N E I L** : They had picked that title before I joined the magazine. I never liked that title. **Anyway**, *The Replacements* was David's favorite band. The band wasn't really doing anything. I called their publicist just to make David happy and it turned out that Paul Westerburg was in the office and the publicist said "I'll give you five minutes with him." Paul had never heard of *Beach Culture*, it was just that the publicist was doing us a favor. He put him on, and I thought, "Okay, I know I only have him for five minutes. I've heard the guy, although I don't even like the band." I knew nothing about them. It wasn't like I was prepared for that interview; it was just one of those things, so I asked him a few questions. He felt the same way, I'm sure. He was like, "Huh?" Finally he said, "Well, I've given you enough time," and said goodbye, and hung up. That's exactly how it happened and, of course, not having a staff and not having an editorial budget to speak of, I was thrilled. I thought "I got The Replacements!" Minneapolis as a beach town in the winter is the most idiotic thing I've ever heard of, but I thought that was funny, and since I didn't have a lot of corporate people looking at me asking "Why are you running this article? It's so dumb," we went ahead and published it. A better example would have been the John Wesley Harding article that we published. Readers would call me up about that and ask "Why are you doing an article on John Wesley Harding?" I really love his music and we hit it off and logically, if I had to actually stretch it, he was from a beach town in England, but that had nothing to do with him. Subsequently readers would ask, "Why put him in?" But I put him in because I like him, and I think he is important and I think, on an attitude level, it works. He wrote an article about Graceland and Coca Cola and Howard Finster and the relationship between those things and Graceland doesn't have anything to do with the beach, but... **E M I G R E** : Let me interrupt you for a second. Did you, at the beginning of this answer, mention that there was no distribution for *Beach Culture*? **N E I L** : There was very little distribution. **E M I G R E** : On the one hand you say there was a tremendous following... **N E I L** : There was, but I am using relative terms.

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EMIGRE: I am trying to establish how successful *Beach Culture* really was. NEIL: Success is a very strange term. Was it successful in terms of a bottom line? In fact, it was about to make money when we closed down, so it was going to be successful very quickly, in terms of magazine standards, within seven issues. We were hitting the break even point with the exception of one issue, which David went way over budget on. EMIGRE: Which issue was that? NEIL: Issue N°3. The true story on that is that we were told that there wasn't going to be an issue N°3, and that we should just leave because they hadn't sold ads. And I felt like "What, we're here illegally?" And they said "Well, there is no authorization for your project." I told them that we were not leaving, and that I paid David out of my own pocket and that I wouldn't take a salary for that issue. So we stayed there without telling anybody else and I just became a monster, bribing people from the ad department. It took us four months to get it published, and to this day I was never reimbursed. EMIGRE: But in the end for whom was it successful besides yourselves? NEIL: It was very successful in terms of our careers. It was about to make money, but in the end they claimed that there was ultimately a huge loss. I don't know what the actual bottom line loss was, but I think it was minimal. We had, without the benefits of any sort of launch whatsoever, a following of, I would say, seven to ten thousand people. Now that's not a significant number of people in the grand scheme of things when you talk about *Details* magazine or any *Conde Nast* type of publication, but essentially, on a steady basis, that's how many copies we sold on the newsstands. EMIGRE: How many subscribers were there? NEIL: There were

THE EPILOGUE

"I can see that on certain levels we opened up a style or at least helped give credence to a type of design that became incredibly influential afterwards."

no subscribers. We had three different distributors and with one issue we didn't even have a distributor.

Emigre. But it was successful, although you might think I am crazy, because on a conventional publishing level it was a disaster. Again, what I felt was so amazing was that without any subscriptions, without any staff, without any support, without any launch, we consistently sold between seven to ten thousand copies. I couldn't get interviewed enough. We had a press kit that was thicker than the magazine. This was without the benefit of any sort of publicity or whatever and, although this is David's contribution, I can see that on certain levels we opened up a style or at least helped give credence to a type of design that became incredibly influential afterwards. Our biggest concern, and my concern for David as his partner in crime in this thing, was that people would not see that. By the time they actually got to *Beach Culture*, after seeing other magazines or ads that had been inspired

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by *Beach Culture*, they would think that we were following the lead. I was told that the advertising director at Nike had a completely Spartan office with one coffee table and the only ornamentation in his office was a copy of *Beach Culture*. I would hear things like this all the time. Just on an emotional level I thought the magazine was a very successful piece of work. **E M I G R E**: Was it successful then merely because of the design? **N E I L**: No, I think it was the whole thing. We didn't know each other. I went to David and said: "Here's the deal, I am giving you work that is going to live up to your design." And my reviews have been just as good as David's reviews. I have stacks of reviews from *The New York Times* and *Esquire* talking about the writing in *Beach Culture*.

I was not afraid to take my words and marry them to something that was a very flashy, overpowering design. Because I knew that once you got around to reading them, they were going to hold your attention. As an editor I got slammed in my community left and right, by people who usually didn't bother reading the magazine. They felt that my art director was hurting my writing. **E M I G R E**:

You are every graphic designer's dream editor! I was reading your introduction in issue #6 where you talk about the design awards that *Beach Culture* won and you say that "speaking from an editorial point of view, it is a unique pleasure to have the words you love be treated with such visual brilliance and respect." Being a designer myself, I could hardly believe this statement coming from an editor, since most editors consider their words as sacred. And your writing wasn't just interpreted by a designer; it was at times made entirely illegible. Could you try to explain what it is that David did that made you let him get away with some of these extreme designs? **N E I L**: We had disagreements throughout the process, generally one major fight per issue. There was one instance in particular where he had made type illegible that I felt was information-oriented and very essential to the reading of the piece. I told him that he couldn't do that. Not that, "You can't do it," but "This is why you can't, etc..." and he laid off. There were a lot of articles that he was allowed to play with in terms of illegibility. Most of the pages that were illegible were pages like the contents page, the "Coming Up" page: stuff that was just pages that I felt were irrelevant to the deeper meaning of this magazine. I wanted the reader to spend time with the magazine. And if the pages

that he obscured were pages that typically lead to making the reader's job easier, I couldn't have cared less. When you went through the magazine on a page-by-page basis, there were very few pages where the actual text was illegible. I heard that *Beach Culture* was considered illegible, but there was really no type obscured that I thought was essential. There were always articles that I liked better than other articles, and in those cases a strong design could prop them up, but most of the time, text and design were equal. **E M I G R E**: What are the most important changes you need to implement in order for *Ray Gun* to last beyond six issues? **N E I L**: What do you mean? **E M I G R E**: Ultimately, at least to me, the real success of a magazine depends on whether it can survive and run a profit. It's easy to go your own way and lose money. That doesn't take much talent. **N E I L**: I could have been successful with *Beach Culture* had I had a more supportive backer. It wasn't a question of having enough backing, it was a matter of having a supportive backer. Editorially and artistically, David fights with me all the time on this, what I had planned to do with *Beach Culture* was to work on it for about ten issues and then functioning in a supervisory capacity, turn it over to

Anyway,

"IN AN UNDERGROUND
YOU DON'T HAVE THE
NOTION OF SUCCESS OR
FAILURE, YOU JUST HAVE
THE NOTION OF MAKING
SOMETHING. AND THAT'S
WHAT SAVES YOU. IT'S
NOT HOW PROFESSIONAL
IT LOOKS, IT'S BECAUSE
YOU ARE DOING WHAT
YOU ARE DOING BECAUSE
YOU BELIEVE IN IT."

Tony Arefin

TONY AREFIN

RAY GUN

"I think it's very difficult for magazines as they become established to retain the sense of excitement and relevance that they had when they were new and fresh and didn't have a lot of corporate expectations."

Chris Parnell

youngers hands and make sure that that continued. It was never my big goal to remain successful. It's the same with *Ray Gun*. My goal is much different than Marvin's [Jarrett's], certainly, but I don't ask, "How do I keep this magazine alive past six issues. I ask how do I keep it vital?" My goal with *Ray Gun* is the same as with everything: it is to really go out there and do something that keeps me excited. I earn essentially the same amount of money no matter what I do. Paying the bills at this point isn't a real concern to me. It's how do I do something that keeps me really excited and is really relevant to the communities that I am most interested in staying within? And if the magazine doesn't do it for me after six or seven issues, I have a lot of interests and I'll start another magazine. This is absolutely not hype. I never go on thinking, although I should, probably, because I would be much richer, about becoming successful. And the attitude isn't to go in and self-destruct, either. We put more on the line than the reputation of these magazines. We also put our own professional reputations and careers on the line. Marvin's mission and Marvin's range of responsibilities is to keep *Ray Gun* on track, so that it's successful by your definition, over a period of years, and it becomes an *Evergreen Review* or something like that. My goal, and my challenge in this, is how do I keep myself interested in the metaphor and still feel I am doing cutting edge work given the parameters of the project? And I can back that up: I write books, I edit magazines, I free-lance. I've been free-lancing on health and fitness for the best magazines in the world for ten or fifteen years. And I have no intention of stopping that, because that's as important to me as anything else. So I have the luxury of saying that these are projects that have to have editorial integrity and I think it's very difficult for magazines as they become established to retain the sense of excitement and relevance that they had when they were new and fresh and didn't have a lot of corporate expectations.

ENTRE: There is no solution to keeping it exciting other than starting a new magazine each time the previous one goes under?

KETL: The question you're asking me, I want to add a disclaimer to. Of course I would hope, with all of my heart, that *Ray Gun* is able to become the magazine that changes the world like *The Face* did in the seventies. I don't know that *The Face* is still changing the world, but it certainly changed my life in the seventies. And I still think that *The Face* is a really important magazine. I would like to be associated with a magazine that accomplishes that over time. But

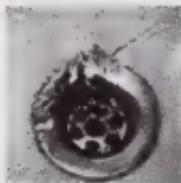
（10月の用意の状況）

anne bardine, senior, tutor, form

Feeding the

What is this affliction that makes graphic designers crave perpetual stylistic (r)evolution?

graphic
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“**A**

15-YEAR-OLD GIRL has filed a \$50,000 claim against the Burbank school district for suspending her because the sweat shirt she fashioned to mourn a slain classmate was imprinted with Old English sigle

letters that school officials regard as gang symbols," the *Los Angeles Times* recently reported. The cover of the Constitution is printed in the same lettering, the student's ACLU lawyer observed. "We thought that was the nicest looking writing. Even Disneyland uses it on some of its signs," the girl's mother, Ruth Cisneros said... "How can they object to a typeface and not the message?"

FROM THE HALLS OF JUSTICE to Sleeping Beauty's castle, forms gain their meaning through cultural agreement, rather than through an intrinsic nature of their own.

Within each new context, Old English lettering becomes a stylistic signifier, encoded through its use. 'Gang style', or 'Authoritarian style' or 'Storybook' style' are descendant mutations of *textur*, a calligraphic writing style prevalent throughout much of Medieval Europe. In the Gothic era it served a functional purpose: its' compact design helped conserve the expensive parchment of the educational and liturgical books that were produced in monastic scriptoria.

HISTORIC FORMS ARE UP FOR GRABS. As the pace of our culture accelerates, surfaces are stripped away, their skins lifted, reapplied and reassigned meanings with increasing frequency. In this cultural condition, graphic design is both participant and product. In practice, the design profession embraces stylistic fashion and fleeting design stars. Yet at the same time, the rapid turnover dizzies the Rational Functionalist in each of us; the apparent reign of surface style leaves us on unsure footing.

S

surface values

TYPE IS VIEWED by many as a shallow obsession with disembodied surfaces. However our activities as designers are based on style's function as a cultural communicator. A recent *Domus* article entitled "Applied ^{style} vs. Intrinsic Style" makes the distinction between style as a "natural" outgrowth of internal parameters (a legitimate or appropriate style) and style as an empty skin merely applied.¹ Style that develops from within is considered pure, while ^{style} applied from without is presumed to corrupt the marriage of content and form. Such value distinctions overshadow the issue of how style moves within the culture and the profession.

IN A MORE NEUTRAL REALM,² style refers to the way in which form is handled. A vocabulary or set of formal characteristics constitutes a particular style, recognized most frequently in retrospect. Style itself is the visual language of a culture: in fashion, in consumer goods, in art, in literature, in all media. Style is ephemeral; it is timely. To be "in style" is to embody the influences and values of your time.

THE PRESUMED LEGITIMACY of so-called intrinsic style has been absorbed into the prevailing value system. Graphic design is an amorphous profession. Its membership includes store front sign painters, Madison Avenue art directors, designers with graduate degrees, and desktop publishers, perpetuating the need for a quasi-professional value structure to elevate status and salaries for those on the "high" end. Living and working as we do in a culture dominated by industry, this structure has transformed over time to suit those needs. Commercial relevance has caged our self-definition. To openly embrace our very own sumptuous surfaces solely for their formal qualities dilutes the authority we have contrived through the mandates of Rational Functionalism. This does not keep us from making decisions based on aesthetics alone, it just means we keep quiet about it.

HOWEVER, GOOD LOOKS AREN'T ENOUGH. A value system can sustain (and confine) the internal dialogue of our profession; it can construct a framework for our decision-making, a structure we can work for or against. For the most part, current ideology relies on an oversimplified variation of Modernism: rational,

functional, and socially responsible. While these values have their merit, they can at times limit the discussion. In the recent *AIGA Journal on Modernism*,² Kathy McCoy, Daniel Friedman, and Massimo Vignelli, in spite of their different viewpoints, all make note of the disparity between the complexity and richness of the original Modernist ideologies and what has become merely an applied Modernist style.

Yet the real contradiction lies between stripped-down Modernist *in theory* and that which the profession values *in practice*, where novelty is most frequently rewarded, and each new fashion is consumed overnight. As our ideals wither in the face of this style itself becomes the scapegoat and the discussion grinds to a

Jorm follows fashion
WOLFGANG WEINGART participated in the revolution against the strict minimalist approach of his Swiss predecessors. While his work is considered within the Modernist idiom, his experimentation with form and structure rejected the "neutral envelope" approach of ostensibly objective form-making in favor of intuitive choice and personal expression. When visiting CalArts in 1998, Weingart commented with disdain that he was no longer in fashion, as though whatever had replaced him as the current design-of-choice was merely a trend somehow not as worthy as the trend he once embodied. Did he mean that the visual expression of his ideas had lost its power to communicate as time had altered its context? Or were the ideas themselves no longer popular? Or was it just that designers had seen the style of his work for too long and now looked to something new, out of boredom alone? I asked Weingart if he could elaborate on what appears to be a preoccupation with forming fashion (style) within the graphic design profession. What is this affliction that makes graphic designers crave perpetual stylistic (r)evolution? Weingart evaded the question, inhibiting inquiry into a realm that makes most designers uneasy.

no longer 5, 10, 15 years ago..

THAT WHICH WE CALL TYPOGRAPHIC
STYLE IS FIRST AND FOREMOST
DETERMINED BY OUR WAY OF LIFE
AND OUR WORKING CONDITIONS.

— Jan Techichold, *On Typography*, 1952



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WEINGART'S REACTION is not uncommon. I, myself, am reluctant to scratch the surface of most graphic design for fear of what I won't find underneath. In the world of so-called legitimate style, "trendy" is a death sentence. When stylistic change in graphic design is tied to the rapid turnover and imitative nature of fashion, we begin to suspect that our work is merely shallow trend-following and empty form-pushing.

IN THE FALL OF 1991, Nancy Skolos and Tom Wedell presented their work to the students at CalArts with a reserve common throughout the profession: the design conglomerates of the 1980's have diminished, out of necessity, to the small offices of the 1990's. With refreshing honesty, Nancy Skolos presented a gorgeous brochure that she admitted had unfortunately led to a decrease in sales for the client. That it was presented to an audience of designers for its formal qualities says that Skolos Wedell considered it one of their better (looking) pieces in spite of the fact that it did not "function" in a way that was meaningful for the client who had commissioned it. When asked what was the purpose of graphic design, if not to aid marketing, Nancy replied, "I don't know... to make the world a better place?"

ALLEVIATING THE CONTRADICTIONS of an oppressive and stratified modern society through design was major impetus behind much of the work and theory of the Bauhaus. However in 1992 America, a graphic designer is most frequently expected to increase profits, not to dissolve class barriers. As the United States crumbles under deficit budgets, military muscle-flexing, and an impoverished infrastructure, that old Modernist desire for an improved world certainly exists. And it is a noble cause. However, gorgeous graphic design, regardless of its efficacy for the client, may or may not contribute positively to the world as a whole, (its content helps determine that answer), but it does enrich the visual vocabulary of the profession. And yet we seem to feel uncomfortable embracing that as a valuable contribution in and of itself.

WE TAKE PLEASURE IN STYLE. We thrive on form. The content of our work is for the most part predetermined; we design to indulge our obsession with the visual. Our integrity is compromised by clients who want larger point sizes or a dif-

ferent color palette. We design that fall short of our budget constraints or This becomes the "heretical" potentially functional, illustrations for purely aesthetic seek out paper company projects albeit more creative and finesse into the and these are the reputations are made. They're seal-of-approval that in turn lecture, to show this very non-peers in the next design competition is rewarded ex formal to obsession with its surface aesthetics no longer apply. is judged out of context, in spades no further than immediate to consider that our personal style and fashion as a system: to reveal that our system says our living inappropriate and another beautiful, real, related in expressive artifice featuring when attempting to industry. Yet in the interim these acknowledgements are forces influential to our world and cannot have an indisputable they link to dominate most been made to evaluate what a stylized fashion, although denounced. To underscored between style and culture and examine it from a historical perspective its contemporary incarnations a "venerable animal" can to be this without losing sight can happen when deconstructing

THE HISTORY OF MODERN DESIGN IS VERY MUCH ABOUT A HISTORY OF STYLE DEVELOPING INDEPENDENTLY OF IDEOLOGY.

— Dan Friedman, *Modernism: Style vs. Ideology*, 1991

timeliness vs. timelessness

note to "job" status the greater aesthetic expectations dictated by client-imposed parameters, and "butter" work. What is withheld from slide present-and-power, clothing and material possessions, could be reasons. Meanwhile, works purchased by non-aristocrats, style became an extensions or items whose exchangeable commodity of social status. The "democratic freedom: these are the ratification" of elite images of wealth exploded with the rise of the hours of the morning, industrialism and mass production by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Imitations of aristocratic style became affordable in the awards, the professional for the burgeoning middle class. Extravagant fake ornamentation guarantees we will be asked to come to replace quality and craftsmanship in conveying the value of work and to judge the worth of one of material goods. "By the 1830s, the term design was assuming a petition. That this work is modern definition, describing the superficial application of decorative terms alone exposes orientation to the form and surface of a product. The notion of decorative value. Functionalism was becoming more and more distinct from the overall plan. How could they, when the worth of production. This separation of form from substance became a split-second time, by criteria that characterize the paradox of nineteenth-century industrialism."

INCREASINGLY, THE IMAGE gained currency. The rise of photographic design is bound to photography and chromolithography contributed to the growth, power as much as to client communication and proliferation of the disembodied image. "Freed from the constraints of professional recognition and encumbrances of matter, the look of the visible world could now communicate while acting easily, and inexpensively, reproduced." As images of style (gargoyles) to confess that we became something one could acquire, their perceived might be considered self-referential, the signifieds of their original referents, justify design's relevance to become the real commodities.

dialogue of the professional as a REACTION to the stylistic free-for-all that painted the face of necessary when assessing in the Victorian era, the designers of de Stijl, the Bauhaus, the rationalization client needs. Constructivism and others sought to reinstate meaning into form, invisible role in what we do, but rather to create form that held intrinsic meaning; to sweep discussions. Few attempts have clean the immoral application of meaningless decorative pretense. It suspect is an obsession with Many aligned themselves with engineering, mass production and its prevalence is frequently socialist politics. The visual embodiment of their revolutionary the reciprocal relationship ideas were, for these designers, fundamental and universal. At graphic design, it is helpful in the same time, "...for most, an endless obsession with pure form, perspective, as well as in spite of (or oblivious to) any clear ideology was considered a nation as what Neville Brody sufficiently noble endeavor."

assuming itself." Delightful MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, the American marketplace of the aesthetic pleasures... presented a different set of criteria for both the motivation and being sex or humor. the evaluation of form-making. By the 1930s, design had become

History is

an effective tool of commerce and was shaped by the competition of the marketplace and the drive for profit. (This was, of course, taking place in Europe as well, only to a lesser degree. In Europe it was not uncommon to have national boards whose sole purpose was to promote good design. Whereas, "...in America the very notion of privileging 'aesthetic' principles over considerations of market demand and 'popular' taste tended to be regarded as an expensive indulgence."²²) While American designers were committed in their rhetoric to the rationalist and functionalist foundations of Modernism, "...the U.S. designers lacked...the political and social idealism that inspired their European counterparts and soon their slogan 'styling follows sales' had replaced the more purist 'form follows function'.²³

CORPORATIONS UTILIZED planned obsolescence, with unabashed honesty, as a marketing tool to stimulate the shrinking markets of the Depression. Manufacturers were no longer content to control only the means of production. In the search for ever-expanding markets, their influence spread through the shrewd use of advertising and design into the realm of consumption, by promoting a culture of wasteful excess in which the lifespan of material goods became increasingly shorter, diminishing ultimately to one of disposability (a strategy which created many new opportunities for the budding design profession). This "dynamic obsolescence" embodied the ideals of change, progress, and upward mobility; conspicuous consumption posing as the American Dream. "By the early 1920s, the advertising industry had begun to publicly define itself as both 'the destroyer and creator in the process of the ever-evolving new.'¹¹¹

MANY OF THE AVANT-GARDE designers from Europe were thrown into this new arena. While their ideas influenced American design education, their impact was felt primarily through the influence of their styles, re-contextualized and de-contextualized within the American marketplace. "Agha paints a pessimistic picture of the acceptance of European designers, stating that they were used because they could produce 'Attention Value, Snap, and Wallop; while in their spare time they were allowed to indulge in innocent discussions about the Machine Age, fitness to function, and objectivity in art."¹⁰¹

last week.

— John Weber, in discussion at CalArts, 1992

Y neomania

IF WE FAST-FORWARD to contemporary America, where the image has come to replace not only specific realities but, increasingly, verbal communication as well, we see that ~~style~~ has begun to feed on itself, entering into a monologue of self-reference. In the ensuing procession of stylistic simulacra, forms give their original meanings the slip. Imagine, a type style that began in an ascetic cloister now signifies both an urban street gang and State power. Increasingly, "...objects in practice become signs and signs objects and a second nature takes the place of the first—the initial layer of perceptible reality."¹¹ Specific styles refer only loosely to their origins, if at all. And stylistic change itself acts as a signifier for progress and evolution: the most recent (regardless) has become synonymous with the best, a legacy of planned obsolescence. While the condition itself is not new, it now moves with unprecedented speed.

STYLES ARE ASSIMILATED overnight in the search for the "ever-evolving new." Not only is real history up for grabs, but also each and every new look as it originates, surfaces, and is instantly sucked up, at which point it is deemed "history." Its very existence guarantees its death. "Style is something to be used up. Part of its significance is that it will lose its significance."¹²

WE LIVE IN AN ERA of sound bytes and hyper-time. The immediacy of television, satellite connections, fax machines and phone modems has propelled our reality into hyper-drive. These technological advances when combined with the American values of freedom of consumptive choice, upward mobility, and progress through rapid turnover, in part a by-product of the consumerist growth strategies of twentieth-century commerce, create an insatiable appetite for the new. "Roland Barthes called this phenomenon neomania, a madness for perpetual novelty where 'the new' has become defined strictly as a 'purchased value,' something to buy."¹³

style

style

Graphic design: feeding the fire

21 BY JEFFREY L. BROWN

AS GRAPHIC DESIGNERS, we are not necessarily predisposed to chase after fads; those who do are participants in (victims of and party to) a hegemonic social condition that demands and consumes anything new. The pressures of neomania are compounded by the design establishment's system of rewards and rhetoric. Competitions tend to take only a quick glance at the surface of work and publications most frequently give recognition to those with a unique personal style (and those best at self-promotion) while educators focus on appropriate communication and function. It is a mixed message that can leave designers unclear about the impetus and impact of their work.

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR with the transformations of April Greiman's work. These developments grew out of her personal experience and interests more directly than from specific client applications. (Designers with a singular vision tend to seek out clients for whom their inclinations are most appropriate, be they architects, rock bands, or corporations: the inverse of "In the beginning was the Client..." correct functionalist behavior.) Greiman's considerable notoriety did not arise because of the legitimacy of intrinsic design solutions she invoked, or because of the function of her work. It was her style.

CERTAINLY RECOGNITION has its limitations: a designer's lifespan is getting shorter by the minute. When Jonathan Barnbrook came to visit CalArts in early 1992, he showed work he had done since leaving the Royal College of Art. His portfolio included a Call for Entries for the Designers & Art Directors club in Britain which he produced just two years after his graduation. Barnbrook represents a recent British phenomenon: the student star. It is difficult to imagine the American design community embracing such a young designer. He confessed he had been selected by the D & AD in an attempt to boost their "hipness" ratings. At the same time, he expressed a real fear and loathing for the Graphic Design Pop Star treadmill—and with good reason. "I'd hate to think I'll be a has-been in ten years." That's a realistic fear, considering his almost instantaneous stardom. Prematurely it would seem, once designers gain recognition they are perceived by some to be "history": their newness has worn off.

THANKFULLY, THE REIGN of a small and entrenched design aristocracy is fading. Invigorating new voices are necessary, but the rate at which styles and stylists are being gobbled up and spit out reflects more than just growth within the profession: its pace is in synch with consumerist culture.

NEVILLE BRODY'S STYLISTIC OVERHAUL from his early work for The Face, bold and hyperactive, to his later work for Arena, a stripped-down Helvetica and grid-based design, came out of necessity. His early



STYLE IS SOMETHING
TO BE USED UP. PART
OF ITS SIGNIFICANCE
IS THAT IT WILL LOSE
ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

— Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images*, 1987

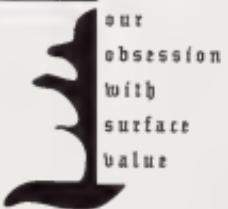
(Please note this is not an attempt to define or qualify influence, historical or stylistic quotations, and general fashion trends, of which we see all participants—this is a slippery area, and one in which it is difficult to draw definitive boundaries.)

SOME DESIGNERS LOOK to the established stars to foretell the future. When Brody made a presentation at the 1989 AIG Conference in San Antonio, he spoke about creating original solutions from familiar ingredients. Apparently oblivious to the content of Brody's talk, a spectator actually raised his hand and asked, "So what's the new hot typeface for next year?"

HERE'S THE PARADOX: while an overt personal style is easily skinned, it is also most frequently recognized, rewarded, and published. Since graphic design is not necessarily a lucrative profession, recognition is the primary reward for many; it validates our work in the eye of our peers and potential clients. At the same time, once noticed, the countdown begins. On the other hand, if the style is weak or subtle; if it requires deciphering, engagement, or worst of all, time; while it may slip past imitators, it also risks being overlooked by the rewards system. Ironically, the same is true for the work of good marketing servants (the real functionalists) who, chameleon-like, remain relatively anonymous in their work (the most appropriate is not always the most innovative). Thus, the current reward system strengthens the craving for a stylistic "ever-evolving new" as it forces the concerns and interests of the profession to the surface level.

lime for change? **S**URFACES COME AND GO. Meaning is in a constant state of flux. Weingart's approach, his spirit of rebellion, and his use of intuitive decision-making still resonate, but unfortunately, his formal vocabulary is burnt out. Whereas the look of Kathy McCoy's work continually transforms while she holds onto a belief system that is essentially a set of professional ethics. She is openly nourished by new influences: linguistic theory, the vernacular, MTV or Photoshop. Her formal vocabulary is broad and changing as her work always appears fresh. Ideas have more staying power (but are by no means timeless) while forms have an increasingly shorter life span. IF WE ACCEPT that the nature of graphic design, like style, is ephemeral, and, like Old English, carries meaning via context, changing concommitantly with cultural shifts (whether or not our ideas, process, or values also transform) then our formal styles should respond with fluidity over the span of our personal continuums. Each new step in the continuum is not necessarily better, maybe just different; at once a reply to the work that preceded it and a manifestation of the cultural forces that shape the new environment. The motivation for change is multi-layered: personal growth, new influences, shifting contexts, and social and economic conditions contribute. As these conditions place pressure on our performance, it is important to recognize them for what they are, and to assess how they influence values we accept as natural.

IT IS TIME TO TAKE STOCK of the contradictions between design rhetoric and realities. Well-intentioned designers wishing to make a positive contribution to the world begin to feel like decorators rather than communicators, when work is evaluated in functional terms (where function = market share). Many are, but is that inherently evil? Are aesthetic contributions enough? THE CURRENT CHALLENGE, then, is to address the realities of neomania without being seduced by it; to understand the impact our shifting culture has on both the aesthetic milieu and self-defined value system of our profession; to honestly analyze the forces overlooked by early Modernist philosophies: the personal continuum and the "bigness" of style; and to re-evaluate a rewards system that is both superficial and near-sighted. Acknowledging these realities leaves us in search of a better answer, preferably a set of answers that are not so sweeping and concrete that they cannot shift with time and can therefore connect more closely to individual concerns, not pretending to answer universally. A set of ideologies that accepts and analyzes rather than disdains and dismisses the shifting nature of style and the value of aesthetic pleasures may lead to a more realistic connection between theory and practice.



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RAY GUN

I am really not worried about issue #924. Right now I'm worried about issue #92. I want to develop something with a strong enough voice so that it can remain independent of editorial staff changes and business pressures and still remain a piece of work that speaks to an audience. Although I haven't really thought about the long term, what makes Ray Gun attractive is that it has an element of change conceptually built in, because you are talking about cutting edge music aimed at an audience that should be receptive to that, and an industry that needs something like that because there is nothing else out there that really captures music in a conceptual way.

E M I G R E : But this sounds somewhat like it could be the editorial outline of Spin magazine.

N E I L : There is no question that Spin is a really great magazine. But I don't think that Spin is a very pretty magazine. I don't think it is design-oriented and I think that Spin plays a ton of favorites.

E M I G R E : It's not designed like Beach Culture because Spin probably chose to remain more neutral in their design in order to not be out of fashion after six issues.

N E I L : I don't know, maybe that has more to do with the fact that it changes editors far more frequently than it does art directors. But I read Spin. I like their attitude a lot.

E M I G R E : How will Ray Gun be different from Spin?

N E I L : Ray Gun is going to be similar to Beach Culture in that we are going to spend a lot more attention with the design and the marriage of design and words. We're obviously going to be covering Sonic Youth like Spin and every other music magazine. We're going to have, I imagine, a more West Coast orientation just because David and I are here. As far as I am concerned, and I might differ with Marvin here, I am completely indifferent to whole areas of rock journalism, in particular reviews; that is, feeling the need to be on the PR junket circuit and to always be pushing current product. I am far more interested in the quirkiness, the history, the artists, the indies, etc. It's how we feature the artists that makes us slightly different. The cover article of our first issue is on Henry Rollins and we focused on his publishing efforts and his workshirts, as opposed to his music. There will be a very lengthy article on Sonic Youth. This will also set us apart from Spin and other magazines: we give them more pages. David gave six artists he liked an assignment to do an illustration of their favorite song and I don't think Spin would do that: you can't sell ads doing that [because advertisers want their ads positioned next to editorial]. I picked an anonymous article that I like a lot, which is about what happens if a feminist falls in love with a rock singer. And we have a fashion piece photographed by Mar Mahruris. It's six or seven pages long, and there are no clothes in it. It's a very funny piece.

Anyway, David and I went gango over this feeling that Ray Gun had to be different. I can't cover bands in many different ways because they're all the same bands that are on the same circuit and at least fifty or sixty percent of them are going to be in every music magazine out there. But I can try to find the angles that don't have anything to do with music, at least in a very literal sense, and throw them out there and see if there's a need and an audience for them.

Next!

25 μ g per milliliter of serum. An increase in the globulin droplets in the sediment, however, is often taken as an indicator of the hepatitis, but this has little relevance. A single test, such as the complement fixation test, is not reliable, but the immunodiffusion test is more reliable. The immunodiffusion test is more accurate than the complement fixation test, but the immunodiffusion test is more popular in certain countries. The immunodiffusion test is performed by adding the patient's serum to a well containing a suspension of hepatitis antigen. The antigen is usually a suspension of hepatitis virus particles. The antigen is then allowed to gel, so the precipitate can be observed. The precipitate is then measured and compared to the amount of precipitate in the control serum. If the amount of precipitate in the patient's serum is greater than the amount in the control serum, then the patient is considered to be infected with hepatitis.

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February, 1993

Who are you, and what have you done with all those

for unity \$ 28

and have 14 percent sit the entire game and play no offense.



14

Interview with Marvin Jarrett
PUBLISHER/EDITOR OF

RAY GUN

"I am offering people the opportunity to be in what I consider the best pop culture or alternative pop culture magazine in the world."

(Marvin Jarrett)

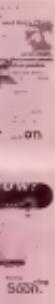
ENIGMA: Being the publisher of a magazine is kind of an anonymous occupation. Unless your name is Jan Wenner or Ted Turner, most people don't really know what the publisher actually does. What is it exactly that you do? **MARVIN:** First of all, I am an editor and a publisher, and with this new magazine, *Ray Gun*, I am wearing all sorts of hats. I sell ads, I deal with the distributor, I deal with the printer and the circulation consultant, I am dealing with publicists on the editorial side, dealing with photographers, the whole nine yards. I have an executive editor, Neil Feinerman, and we both work together as far as getting the editorial together. He has input on things he wants to do and I have input on things I want to do. Neil pretty much handles the actual story as signatures and he deals with the writers. **ENIGMA:** One reason why you wear so many hats, I presume, is because you must have a fairly skeleton crew at this stage. **MARVIN:** I thought we had a skeleton crew at *Cream* magazine, but I think we're even more bare bones on this project. But I like it. I like starting off small with the concept of going out nationally. **ENIGMA:** One of your roles is selling ads. Being a publisher myself, I've tried selling ads but I am terrible at it, perhaps because I am too close to the magazine. I get offended when people turn me down. I take it personally. How do you remain passionate, without becoming bitter or angry, when every nine out of ten advertisers might tell you no? **MARVIN:** I just look at it as a numbers game. I am offering people the opportunity to be in what I consider the best pop culture or alternative pop culture magazine in the world. That's how passionate I feel about it. If they want to be in it, great. I want to help them reach the audience that I perceive they want to reach. If not, hopefully they'll come in at a later time. Selling is a part of life. Everybody is always selling, and I simply can't take refusals personally. Sometimes I shout after I hang up the phone, but I am usually pretty cordial. **ENIGMA:** Could you give me an idea as to how *Ray Gun* is put together? Are you, Neil and David [Are David Carson sitting around the table continually kicking ideas around? **MARVIN:** Neil and I get together probably two or three times a week and then either myself and David will get together at least once a week or we all get together. It's done somewhat guerrilla style, as we call it, because we all live in different cities in Southern California. Hopefully, by the beginning of next year, we'll have a centralized office space. I hope I can talk David into moving closer to Los Angeles. **ENIGMA:** How did you get involved with David? I can imagine how Neil and David found each other because they both worked at *Beach Culture*, but how did you hook up with them? **MARVIN:** I learned about David's work when I was working with Gary Koepke on *Cream*. I picked up *Beach Culture* from the onset and thought it was extremely cool. I really loved a lot of things about it. It was different from what we were doing at *Cream*, but I really loved the style of it. When I left *Cream*, I decided to do a new music magazine and I knew David lived somewhere around here. One day I was going through *Print* magazine, which had done a profile piece on Gary Koepke and David, and decided to give him a call. I knew he was working at *Surfer* magazine so I called him. We got together at a

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trade show and basically decided to work together. When I mentioned I was also looking for an executive editor, he suggested I call Neil, and that's how we started working together. ENIGRE: How do you set up a new magazine? First and foremost I imagine you need a fair amount of money. How do you get it rolling? MARVIN: Well, I had a solid idea and then I put the team together. We made a prototype and then I got some private investors from L.A. Then, I went out and shopped for a distribution deal, which again added to the pie, financially. ENIGRE: You shopped the magazine around to distributors? MARVIN: I went to a consultant who helped me shop the new project around and we went to Curtis, who distributed *Creem*, and we went to Warner. ENIGRE: What do the distributors want to know from you? MARVIN: Obviously they want to know what the editorial content will be, who the players involved are, that sort of thing. All we showed them were some prototype covers. They knew I had done *Creem*, and I told them that I had an award-winning design director involved, and that was pretty much the package that *Ray Gun* was sold on. I actually turned down a couple of major distributors and decided to go with Ingram Periodicals. I like the idea that they are primarily a bookstore and specialty bookstore distribution outlet and they are a direct retailer distributor. Also, they are one of the biggest book distributors in the world. I really wanted to get a major launch on a national basis and they made me a really good offer financially. ENIGRE: They actually put up part of the money? MARVIN: They guarantee certain advances, and those advances will be recouped out of future sales, much like a recording contract. ENIGRE: In your press kit it says that the editorial staff together has won 150 awards. Are those all David's awards? MARVIN: *Creem* won 15 design awards, for which I'd like to take a bit of credit, so those are in there as well. ENIGRE: How about editorial awards? MARVIN: We did not win any. Designers like to spend the money to enter all these contests, that's how they win the awards. ENIGRE: It might have helped you sell your idea to Ingram. MARVIN: Oh, it definitely helped sell. But I would like to take a little credit for the Ingram thing as well. It was the combination of the accomplishment of the three players involved. ENIGRE: So Ingram puts up the money to print the magazine? MARVIN: They put up a lot of the money to print the magazine. But it is supplemented by the other investors. ENIGRE: Would you care to reveal why you discontinued being the publisher of *Creem*? MARVIN: I had a financial partner who decided to sell off a lot of his interest in the magazine and I was not happy with the partner who replaced him. They ended up changing the quality of the paper. They wanted me to get rid of Gary Koepke from the onset, and they eventually replaced Gary with a very amateurish designer. I just wasn't very happy. I couldn't get excited over the magazine anymore. ENIGRE: Why did they want to get rid of Gary? MARVIN: They felt he was too expensive. ENIGRE: I am not surprised. No matter how cheap you are, design is always considered too expensive, and usually gets blamed whenever something doesn't sell. MARVIN: It had nothing to do with creativity. They wanted to cut back on all fronts and I didn't feel that was a front I wanted to cut back on. ENIGRE: Whenever I looked at *Creem*, I always wondered how much work it must have been to put each issue together. Every page was designed entirely different. There was not even the simplest grid apparent, as far as I could detect, which must have made it a very work intensive magazine to put together and quite expensive. I imagine. MARVIN: Yes, it was an expensive magazine to produce on all fronts. It was my first time publishing a magazine and I probably didn't always get the right deal. I know I didn't get the right deal for color separations and printing. I was involved in



Ray Gun Press Kit



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shopping that ensued and I had a financial partner who had no experience in publishing. So we made a few mistakes. But I learned a lot of things with Creem that are helping me out with Ray Gun. I've been able to keep a lot of the cost down. **EMIGRE:** How did you get involved in publishing in the first place? **TYE:** You wake up one day and decided to put out a magazine? **HARVYN:** I was in advertising sales, and the guy who had bought Creem, or at least the name "Creem," because Creem had been out of business for quite some time, offered me a job in sales and I started working for him. This guy was about sixty years old and he didn't know anything about music or advertising. I realized from day one that I could do this better than my boss, and that I should be running the shop. Eventually, I ended up buying the Creem name from this guy, and sort of reinvented the whole magazine together with Gary. **EMIGRE:** It is amazing to hear you talk about how you and many others are still setting out to publish new magazines. As you mentioned in your press release, these are not the best times economically, yet here you are starting yet another magazine, knowing very well that magazines are not the most profitable ventures, even when the economy is flourishing. Why do it? **HARVYN:** I left Creem and for a couple of weeks thought about what to do next. I finally realized I didn't know what else to do, and I decided I had to do another magazine. But I decided to take a different approach and start off smaller. Initially I wanted to do something more underground, but the type of Ray Gun kind of intensified. Ingram originally planned on printing 10,000 magazines, but by the time their print orders were in, we were up to 55,000 magazines, which is what we're printing for the first issue. All because of the retailer demand. **EMIGRE:** How do the retailers know if this magazine will sell? Did they do market research? **HARVYN:** We sent press kits to all the retailers, but I think it was Ingram that really sold the retailers on the idea of taking the magazine. Ingram has a different type of distribution system than Curtis or Warner. We could have printed 200,000 copies with Warner or Curtis and they would have dumped them all in the drug stores and supermarkets. When you end up on those type of newsstands, a 25 to 30 percent sell-through is considered good. It's terrible. I wanted to build a solid base through the bookstores, the newsstands, and the record stores market and grow it out naturally. **EMIGRE:** The 55,000 you are printing reflect the orders that Ingram received from retail? **HARVYN:** Exactly. We actually have orders for 33,000 copies from Waldenbooks and B. Dalton alone. **EMIGRE:** And these orders are based upon B. Dalton and Waldenbooks having seen your press kits and thinking, yes we can sell a magazine? **HARVYN:** Exactly. **EMIGRE:** In your press kit it states that "You couldn't find a magazine that cheers music with enough excitement, risk or passion," but you know as well as I do

" . . . as far as my passion goes, it relates to my need to create something new, and the beauty of doing a magazine is that you get to create something new every month."

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that in order to publish any magazine, you need a lot of passion and I think that every magazine, particularly in the beginning, is created with a lot of passion. How is your passion for *Ray Gun* different from your passion for *Creem*? MARYLIN: I had a lot of passion for *Creem*. It was a new project and eventually it simply turned into a big headache. We started off too big and too grandiose. I wanted to be the next Jimi Hendrix within two or three years. I don't have those expectations anymore. I just want a cool magazine and if it grows, it grows. If not, I'd be happy to sell 50,000 copies. But as far as my passion goes, it relates to my need to create something new, and the beauty of doing a magazine is that you get to create something new every month. We're going to take more chances on the cover with *Ray Gun* than we did with *Creem*. I always had to worry about whether we could sell copies with a particular artist on the cover. I am not going to worry about that anymore. I want the audience to get involved in the attitude of *Ray Gun*, regardless of who the actual star or band is on the cover. I want them to be excited about the attitude of this magazine, versus whether Springsteen is on the cover or not. ENIGRÉE: But how do you know what your audience likes, how do you know what would get them excited? MARYLIN: You develop a network of contributors who bring in those ideas from the street that are going to eventually filter in to what you actually cover in your magazine. ENIGRÉE: How do you find those writers? MARYLIN: Once you put out a magazine, they will find you. I also still have a network of people that I developed through *Creem*, and Neil had his own network of people. ENIGRÉE: You have hired what some people in the design community refer to as the two most "avant garde" or "cutting edge" art directors around today, Gary Koepeke for *Creem* and David Carson for *Ray Gun*. What are you most attracted to in Gary's and David's work, and why did you pick them? Is it the "style" of their design or do you think that the way they design is the most appropriate way to communicate what you have to say editorially? MARYLIN: Both those things, but you also have to be able to work with somebody. When you do a magazine, you have to be able to get along with the person who is putting your ideas on paper. I see myself as coming up with a vision for a certain kind of magazine and then I look for my designer to be able to take that vision and turn it into a concrete form. We're trying to create a magazine with a decidedly underground or street attitude and I think that David Carson can help accomplish this, graphically speaking. David is more suited for that than Gary Koepeke. Gary was great for what we were doing at *Creem*. I think he did a great job. With *Creem*, I had some weird vision that I wanted to do a music magazine with the feel of an L.A. Style, and I felt that Gary's style was very pretty and esthetically pleasing and quite innovative at the time, and I loved what we did. But with *Ray Gun*, I felt that David could bring an underground feel to it. ENIGRÉE: But David has won 150 design awards. You can hardly call that underground. MARYLIN: I am saying underground "feel." The kid on the street in Atlanta, Georgia, who buys *Ray Gun*, is not going to know that David won 150 design awards. I felt that David's work has more of an edge than Gary's. ENIGRÉE: There are a lot of people who have said that the type of design that David creates is difficult to read. Some have gone so far to say it's completely illegible. Doesn't that worry you? MARYLIN: We received a lot of those types of complaints with Gary's work for *Creem*. With this new project, from the start, I've told David that I want people to be able to read it. That's the bottom line. Once you see the magazine, you'll see that it's

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very accessible. **EMILIE:** *Ray Gun's* subtitle "The Bible of Music and Style" is quite ambitious, since style is a rapidly changing phenomenon. Do you expect from your graphic designer that he keeps up with style changes accordingly? **MARVIN:** I think that the style of the magazine will always be evolving. I don't think we'll totally lock ourselves into something so formatted that you have to do a "re-design" every couple of years. The style will evolve from issue to issue. **EMILIE:** Also, in your press kit, it says "that people always have and always will buy quality products that speak directly to their needs. *Ray Gun*, like the music we cover, is that kind of product." I know that this is all advertising copy, but when I read this, and I am a potential advertiser, I can't help but think how presumptuous this sounds. This question is not meant to criticize you, but do you really think you have a knack for knowing what people need? **MARVIN:** You have to have that attitude when you do a magazine. **EMILIE:** But do you really? **MARVIN:** I think I know what the people who are going to buy *Ray Gun* need as far as information goes. **EMILIE:** And is that the type of information they can't find in *Spin* or *Opinion* or the 200 fanzines that exist in America? **MARVIN:** They can probably find bits and parts of it. Ever since Nirvana brought "alternative" music to the masses, I believe there has been a need for a magazine to cover this phenomenon. There are a lot of fanzines out there trying to do this, but a lot of people can't handle reading this newsprint kind of fanzine. We will deliver an exciting magazine to those people and, hopefully, it will do the whole scene some good. Before I started *Ray Gun* I went to the newsstand and looked at all the music magazines available and none of them really turned me on. I didn't think there was one great magazine out there and I wanted to do a great magazine.

EMILIE: Who is a potential reader?

MARVIN: MarvinRusso.com www.you-are-advertised.com

"Ever since Nirvana brought 'alternative' music to the masses, I believe there has been a NEED for a magazine to cover this phenomenon."

1 Marvin Russo

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Bayes. The monster that wouldn't die. First it was the authorities that tried to kill it. Now it is some of the founding forefathers, upset by the commercialization of the scene, that wish it would go away.

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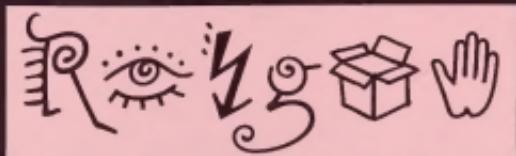
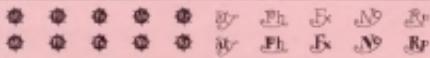


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